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ABSTRACT

This guide discusses the participation of students with disabilities in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), the state's student testing program that is being implemented in response to the Education Reform Law of 1993. The statewide assessment program is designed to strengthen public education in Massachusetts and ensure that all students receive a challenging curriculum based on the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Following an overview of the MCAS, Section 2 of the guide discusses MCAS participation requirements, determines how students with disabilities will participate in MCAS, and communicates resource and other testing needs. Section 3 explains four areas of accommodations allowed on MCAS tests: timing or scheduling, test setting, test presentation, and how the student responds to test questions. For each area, a list of allowable MCAS test accommodations is provided. Section 4 provides guidelines for locally developed alternate assessments for those students unable to use standard paper and pencil MCAS tests. The final two sections describe the statewide MCAS Alternate Assessment that will replace locally developed versions and preparation of students with disabilities for MCAS. Appendices include answers to frequently asked questions on MCAS and guidelines for Individualized Education Program teams. (CR)

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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MCAS

MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Spring 2000 Update

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Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities:

A Guide for Educators and Parents

EC 308030

Massachusetts Department of Education

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Massachusetts Department of Education
This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Education.
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The purpose of this document is to provide educators and parents with guidelines for the participation of students with disabilities in the state's student testing program, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. OVERVIEW OF THE MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS) 2

II. PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN MCAS 2

A. Definition of Students with Disabilities 2
B. MCAS Participation Requirements 2
C. Determining How Students with Disabilities will Participate in MCAS 2
D. Communicating Resource and Other Testing Needs 3

III. MCAS TEST ACCOMMODATIONS 4

A. Students Eligible for Accommodations 4
B. MCAS Test Accommodations 4
Changes in timing or scheduling of the test 5
Changes in test setting 5
Changes in test presentation 5
Changes in how the student responds to test questions 6
C. Non-Allowable MCAS Test Accommodations 7

IV. LOCALLY-DEVELOPED ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS, SPRING 2000 8

A. Appropriateness of Alternate Assessment 8
B. Guidelines for Decision-Making Process 8
C. Developing an Alternate Assessment 9
D. Prohibited Assessment Methods 10
E. Student Identification Form 10
F. Alternate Assessment Student Report 10

V. STATEWIDE MCAS ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT, SCHOOL YEAR 2000-2001 12

VII. PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR MCAS 13

A. Preparing Students with Disabilities for MCAS 13
B. Parent and Community Collaboration on MCAS 13
C. Available Resources 14

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Commonly Asked Questions 15
Appendix B: Guidelines for IEP Teams: Determining How Students with Disabilities Should Participate in the MCAS: 17
Appendix C: *Alternate Assessment Student Report Form* (sample) 19
Appendix D: Acknowledgements 21

I. Overview of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is the state's student testing program that is being implemented in response to the *Education Reform Law of 1993*. The statewide assessment program, along with other components of Education Reform, is designed to strengthen public education in Massachusetts and ensure that all students receive a challenging curriculum based on the Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks*. MCAS is also designed to improve teaching and learning, promote school and district accountability, and beginning with the class of 2003, certify high school diplomas.

In 2001, grade 10 students will be required to pass the grade 10 MCAS *English Language Arts* and *Mathematics* tests as one step toward fulfillment of the state's high school graduation requirement. Students who fail either or both tests will be given multiple opportunities between grade 10 and the end of their senior year to retake the test(s) they failed.

Both state law (Massachusetts *Education Reform Law of 1993)* and federal law *(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—Amendments of 1997* "IDEA-97"), require the full participation of students with disabilities in state- and district-wide testing programs. Lawmakers recognize that students with disabilities are more likely to be provided with learning opportunities equal to their non-disabled peers if their academic achievement is evaluated based on the same learning standards as that of non-disabled students. When test results are used for accountability purposes, schools are motivated to direct instructional attention and resources toward students who will be tested and for whom results will be reported.

In 2000, students are tested in *English Language Arts*, *Mathematics*, and *Science & Technology* in grades 4, 8, and 10; students in grades 8 and 10 are also tested in *History and Social Science*. MCAS tests include multiple-choice, short-answer (*Mathematics* only), and open-response questions. A writing prompt is used for the *English Language Arts Composition* test. *MCAS Question Tryouts* will also be administered in selected schools at grade 3 *(Reading)*, grade 5 *(Science & Technology* and *History and Social Science)*, grade 6 *(Mathematics)*, and grade 7 *(Reading)*.

Students in special education at the appropriate grade level are expected to participate in *Question Tryouts*, either routinely or with necessary test accommodations, if the school they attend has been designated as a participating site.

MCAS measures student achievement levels based on the academic learning standards contained in the Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks* and the MCAS performance standards. The curriculum for students with disabilities, as for all students, should be aligned with these standards.

II. Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS

A. Definition of Students with Disabilities

A student with a disability is a student who has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) provided under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or a plan provided under Section 504 of the federal *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*.

B. MCAS Participation Requirements

The Massachusetts *Education Reform Law* states that ***all*** students in publicly-supported programs in grades 4, 8, and 10, including students with disabilities, must participate in MCAS, including

- students attending public schools
- students in charter schools
- students in educational collaboratives
- students in private schools receiving publicly-funded special education
- students in institutional settings receiving special educational services

C. Determining How Students with Disabilities will Participate in MCAS

During the year prior to statewide testing, the student's IEP or 504 Team should meet to determine *how* the student will participate in MCAS and which allowable MCAS test accommodation(s), if any, should be provided.[1] These decisions must be made separately for each subject area. (For example, a student may take the standard MCAS test either with or without accommodations in certain subject areas, and/or take alternate assessments in other subject areas.) Teams should consider test accommodations that are part of the student's IEP, and which are therefore based on instructional accommodations regularly provided to the student, and those that are necessary in order for the student to demonstrate his/her knowledge.

IEP Teams must document in the *Addendum to the IEP* all accommodations that will be used by the student on MCAS tests. While not mandated to do so, 504 Teams also may wish to use the *Addendum* to guide and record their decisions on student participation in MCAS.

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[1] While the vast majority of students eligible for accommodations are those with an IEP or served by a 504 Plan, Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* allows for disabled students who do not fit this profile to request that accommodations be considered. To determine such a student's eligibility, a request for accommodation with supporting evidence of a disability must be provided to the local administrator of special education.

In determining how a student with disabilities will participate in MCAS, the IEP or 504 Team must address the following questions:

1. "*Can the student take standard MCAS tests under* ***routine conditions*** *(the standard conditions and test administration procedures provided for most students completing the tests)?*"

2. "*If the student is not able to take the standard MCAS tests under routine conditions, will he or she be able to take these tests if appropriate test* ***accommodations*** *are provided? If this is the case, which accommodations should be offered?*"

3. "*If a student cannot take the tests, even with accommodations, what would be an appropriate* ***alternate assessment*** *to enable the student to demonstrate his or her knowledge based on learning standards contained in the* Curriculum Frameworks*?*"

If a student with disabilities is also **limited English proficient** (LEP), the Team should determine how the student will participate in MCAS based

- first, on the student's LEP status
- second, on whether the student requires test accommodations or an alternate assessment

See the Department publication entitled *Requirements for the Participation of Students with Limited English Proficiency* for additional information regarding LEP students.

D. Communicating Resource and Other Testing Needs

Prior to MCAS testing, the IEP or 504 Teams must notify the school principal if a student will need testing accommodations so that the principal may make necessary and appropriate arrangements.

III. MCAS Test Accommodations

A. Students Eligible for Accommodations

Students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or who are provided with instructional accommodations under a Section 504 Plan are eligible for MCAS test accommodations[2].

B. MCAS Test Accommodations

Test accommodations are allowable changes in the routine conditions under which students take the MCAS tests. When used properly, they remove barriers to participation in assessment, and provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and achievement. Test accommodations must not alter in any way *what* is being tested or provide suggestions to students as to correct answers, nor may they in any way violate MCAS test security and ethics requirements.

The four areas of accommodations allowed on MCAS tests involve changes in:

- the **timing** or **scheduling** of the test: for example, administration of the test in short intervals, or at a time of day that takes into account the student's medical needs
- the **test setting:** for example, administration of the test individually or in a small group setting
- **test presentation,** provided that the accommodation does not alter what is being tested: for example, test questions in large-print or Braille
- **how the student responds to test questions**: for example, the student dictates his or her responses to the test administrator

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[2] While the vast majority of students eligible for accommodations are those with an IEP or served by a 504 Plan, Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* allows for disabled students who do not fit this profile to request that accommodations be considered. To determine such a student's eligibility, a request for accommodation with supporting evidence of a disability must be provided to the local administrator of special education.

Following is a list of Massachusetts Department of Education allowable MCAS test accommodations:

Changes in timing or scheduling of the test

1. Administer test in short periods with frequent breaks
2. Administer test at a time of day that takes into account the student's medical needs or learning style

Changes in test setting

3. Administer test in a small group setting
4. Administer test in a room other than the one used by the rest of the class
5. Administer test to the student individually (using routine administration procedures)
6. Administer test with the student seated at the front of the room
7. Administer test in a carrel
8. Administer test with the student wearing noise buffers (after directions have been given using routine administration procedures)
9. Administer test with a test administrator familiar to the student

Changes in test presentation

10. Administer test using magnifying equipment or enlargement devices
11. Test administrator reads and/or verbally clarifies general administration instructions and test directions
12. Administer large-print edition of the test
13. Administer Braille edition of the test
14. Administer test allowing the student to use a place marker
15. Test administrator assists the student in tracking test items
16. Administer test using the student's amplification equipment
17. Test administrator reads the test to the student (*ELA Composition*, *Mathematics*, *Science & Technology*, and/or *History and Social Science* tests ONLY); **the test administrator may not read the *ELA Language and Literature* test or *Reading Question Tryout* to the student**
18. Test administrator translates the test in American Sign Language or other signed system for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (test directions; *ELA Composition*, *Mathematics*, *Science & Technology*, and/or *History and Social Science* tests ONLY; test administrator may **NOT** sign the *ELA Language and Literature* test for the student)

Changes in how the student responds to test questions

19. Answers dictated to a scribe (except for the *ELA Composition* test): scribe may not edit or alter student responses in any way
20. Answers recorded using a template
21. Answers recorded using audio tape (except for *ELA Composition* test), to be later transcribed into the *Answer Booklet* by the test administrator or staff member assigned by the principal
22. Test administrator checks periodically to ensure that the student is placing responses in the appropriate area of the *Answer Booklet*
23. Answers recorded by the student using **assistive technology**; responses generated in this manner do **NOT** need to be hand copied into the student's *Answer Booklet*

    If a typewriter or word processor is used as an allowed test accommodation, the following requirements must be met:

    1. Student may not use a spell check or grammar check
    2. Each page of the printout must show

       - the student's name
       - the school's name
       - the student's state-assigned identification number
       - the 6-digit code from the bar code label attached to the bottom right-hand corner of the student's *Answer Booklet*
       - the number of the question for this response

    3. All printout pages must be placed inside the student's *Answer Booklet* and returned in the "Special Handling" envelope. Do NOT use paper clips, rubber bands, binder clips, staples, or tape to attach pages.

24. Answers recorded by the student directly in *Student Test Booklet* instead of the *Answer Booklet* and copied verbatim into the *Answer Booklet* by the test administrator or staff member designated by the principal. The test administrator or designated staff member may not edit or alter the student responses in any way.

    NOTE: If answers are not copied in the *Answer Booklet*, the student will not receive credit for his or her response.

25. Other accommodation with written approval from the Department of Education

NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list; schools may consider other accommodations that are used in a student's instructional program, provided that the accommodation does not alter in any way the content of what is being tested. Written approval from the Student Assessment Services Unit at the Department of Education is required.

Principals must contact the Student Assessment Services Unit at the Department of Education at (781) 338-3625 to review the appropriateness of any accommodation not listed above, and receive written approval before proceeding with its use during testing. If the accommodation is allowed upon review by the Department, principals must mark code 25 in the "*To Be Completed by Principal or Designee*" section of the *Answer Booklet* cover, and must provide a description of the accommodation.

C. Non-Allowable MCAS Test Accommodations

Please note the following prohibited MCAS accommodations:

- student may not dictate, tape record, or otherwise verbally transmit the *English Language Arts Composition* test to a scribe
- test administrator may not read or sign any portion of the *English Language Arts Language and Literature* test to a student
- student may not use a calculator during any grade 4 *Mathematics* test session or any non-calculator session of the grade 8 or grade 10 *Mathematics* test
- student may not take MCAS tests for a grade level that is unmatched to the student's chronological age (e.g., grade 4 test administered to a grade 8 student)
- test administrators may not paraphrase, rephrase, simplify, or alter test questions in any way

Additional general prohibitions are described in the Requirements for Security and Ethics section (pages 9-11) of the *Principal's Administration Manual, Spring 2000*.

IV. Locally-Developed Alternate Assessments, Spring 2000

A. Appropriateness of Alternate Assessment

Alternate assessments provide a means of assessing student achievement for those students who are unable to demonstrate their knowledge and skills on standard paper-and-pencil MCAS tests. Alternate assessments are intended for a very small number of students who cannot participate in standard MCAS tests because of the nature and severity of their disabilities.

Students who are able to take a standard paper-and-pencil test should, in the vast majority of cases, take the standard MCAS tests rather than alternate assessments. IEP and 504 Teams are directed to use the guidelines outlined in Appendix B of this document in making decisions about individual students.

The Department will monitor the use of alternate assessments statewide and will investigate those schools and districts in which the number of students taking alternate assessments is unusually high and/or fluctuates significantly from one year to the next.

B. Guidelines for Decision-Making Process

In determining how a student with disabilities will participate in each MCAS test, the IEP Team must address the following questions:

- "Can the student take standard MCAS tests under routine conditions (the standard conditions and test administration procedures provided for most students completing the tests)?"
- "If the student is not able to take the standard MCAS tests under routine conditions, will he or she be able to take these tests if appropriate test accommodations are provided? If this is the case, which accommodations should be offered?"
- "If a student cannot take the tests, even with accommodations, what would be an appropriate **alternate assessment** to enable the student to demonstrate his or her knowledge based on learning standards contained in the *Curriculum Framework*?"

Refer to Appendix B for further guidance in determining who should take an alternate assessment

C. Developing an Alternate Assessment

Once the IEP or 504 Team determines that an alternate assessment is required, the Team must develop an alternate assessment for the student. Decisions on a student's participation must be made separately for each subject area. Refer to Appendix B for specific guidelines on IEP decision-making.

Locally-developed alternate assessments must be based on the learning standards in the Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks* and should address, at minimum, the following in each subject area being alternately assessed:

1. **The subject area(s) in which the student requires an alternate assessment.**

   Students may be required to take alternate assessments in one or more of the following subject areas

   - *English Language Arts Composition*
   - *English Language Arts Language and Literature*
   - *Mathematics*
   - *Science & Technology*
   - *History and Social Science* (grades 8 and 10 only)

2. **The number of learning standards in the subject area that will be alternately assessed.**

   It is recommended that a subset of the learning standards for a particular content area serve as the focus of the alternate assessment.

3. **The method(s) of collecting evidence to demonstrate the student's achievement of the learning standards.**

   Alternate assessments should assess a student's knowledge and skills of material addressed by the learning standards. A range of methods may be used to document student achievement based on the learning standards of the *Curriculum Frameworks*, such as

   - collecting samples (maintaining a portfolio) of a student's work
   - documenting a student's achievement through use of charts, graphs, or through electronic media, such as videotape, audiotape, or photographs
   - recording systematic observations of a student's performance in daily classroom activities

In developing an alternate assessment, the Team should be aware that evidence collected over a period of time and/or from multiple sources will yield a more accurate and reliable measure of student achievement than will evidence obtained from a single or limited sources of information collected over a shorter duration.

4. **The methods used for evaluating a student's performance and achievements (to determine whether and to what degree the student has met the learning standards).**

   Documentation should permit educators to make judgments regarding the specific levels of current achievement relative to those *Curriculum Framework* learning standards that are the focus of the alternate assessment. The evaluation should be in written form with a copy placed in the student's record and a copy given to the parent or guardian.

NOTE: Results of the spring 2000 alternate assessments should NOT be sent to the Department of Education.

D. Prohibited Assessment Methods

The use of "off-level" MCAS tests (e.g., administering standard MCAS on-demand tests for a grade level unmatched to the student's chronological age) is prohibited.

The use of substitute "off-the-shelf" standardized tests and diagnostic tests normally associated with special education evaluations is prohibited. Since alternate assessments are specifically intended to assess the achievement of students who cannot take paper-and-pencil tests, using a substitute form of standardized testing for the alternate assessment is inappropriate. Also, since alternate assessments must be based on the learning standards in the Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks*, off-the-shelf tests are not appropriate.

E. Student Identification Form

Principals or their designees must also complete a *Student Identification Form* for each student with a disability who participates in MCAS, even when the student will be alternately assessed.

F. Alternate Assessment Student Report

Principals or their designees must complete an *Alternate Assessment Student Report* form for each student who takes an alternate assessment. A sample form is provided in Appendix C of this document. The *Alternate Assessment Student Report* form must be returned along with all other MCAS testing materials after test administration as directed in the *MCAS Principal's Administration Manual, Spring 2000*. Principals should

coordinate with special education personnel to ensure that *Alternate Assessment Student Report* forms are completed accurately.

Information compiled from *Alternate Assessment Student Report* forms will inform and assist in development of the statewide MCAS Alternate Assessment, and will provide data regarding the kinds of alternate assessments conducted in 2000, as well as the number and profile of students who took them.

V. Statewide MCAS Alternate Assessment, School Year 2000-2001

Since 1998, students with disabilities in Massachusetts who have required alternate assessments have participated in locally-developed versions. Beginning in spring 2001, a statewide alternate assessment will replace all locally developed alternate assessments. All Massachusetts students who take alternate assessments will be required to use the *MCAS Alternate Assessment*.

The statewide *MCAS Alternate Assessment* will document student achievement of the Massachusetts *Curriculum Framework* learning standards by employing a range of assessment methods and types of evidence. A statewide alternate assessment will permit the Massachusetts Department of Education to provide detailed reports to parents, schools, and districts on the performance of students with disabilities who take alternate assessments, and will enable educators and parents to compare results of these students across schools and districts in the state. Reporting results on alternate assessments will also allow schools to develop challenging programs of instruction for students with significant disabilities that are based on the state's *Curriculum Frameworks*.

The *MCAS Alternate Assessment* will be available in four subject areas: *English Language Arts* (with separate alternate assessments in *Reading* and *Composition*), *Mathematics*, *Science & Technology*, and *History and Social Science*.

Prior to its implementation, orientation and training will be provided to educators and parents on the statewide *MCAS Alternate Assessment* and its use. This training will include a component on aligning curriculum for students with significant disabilities with the state's learning standards.

In the majority of cases, students who require alternate assessments will be addressing learning standards at levels of difficulty and complexity substantially below those of their age-level peers. However, in some instances, a student requiring alternate assessment will address learning standards at or near the level of his or her peers in general education. In such cases, alternately assessed students must demonstrate required levels of achievement of the grade 10 learning standards in order to fulfill the state's competency determination for graduation. Further details regarding these requirements will be published during the 2000-2001 school year.

VII. Planning and Preparation for MCAS

A. Preparing Students with Disabilities for MCAS

MCAS is based exclusively on the learning standards of the Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks* and participation is required for all students. Therefore, students with disabilities must be engaged in an instructional program that:

- is based on the *Curriculum Frameworks* learning standards
- uses varied approaches to instruction, and
- includes a range of opportunities that enable all students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Educators should analyze what is being taught in their schools and classrooms, and collaborate to plan and implement an instructional program that enables *all* students to acquire the content knowledge and skills outlined in the *Curriculum Frameworks*.

B. Parent and Community Collaboration on MCAS

Parents of students with disabilities also play a key role. In order to support the preparation of students, parents should:

- meet regularly with their child's teachers to discuss whether their child's instructional program has been aligned with the learning standards
- inquire at their IEP or 504 Team meetings about use of appropriate and allowable accommodations during MCAS testing
- inquire about opportunities for their child to participate in practice test-taking and to learn effective test-taking strategies
- review class assignments and make sure that adequate time is set aside for homework

Additionally, parents and community members are encouraged to support MCAS in the following ways:

- work with the local School Council to ensure that the academic goals outlined in the School Improvement Plan are tied to the high standards of the *Curriculum Frameworks* for all students in the school

- raise awareness of the *Curriculum Frameworks* and the MCAS tests by participating in open forums at their school or within their district, especially those pertaining to students with disabilities

C. Available Resources

The following publications are available to assist educators in preparing their students for the MCAS tests:

- Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks* in each of the four content areas: *English Language Arts*, *Mathematics*, *Science & Technology*, and *History and Social Science*. Each *Framework* describes the learning standards on which the MCAS test for that content area is based and describes broad guiding principles of instruction.

- *Guides to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System* in each of the four content areas. The *Guides* provide examples of how the learning standards in the *Curriculum Frameworks* will be tested and include sample test questions.

- *Release of Spring 1999 Test Items*

- *Release of Spring 1999 Test Items (Spanish)*

- *Release of May 1998 Test Items*

- Scoring guides for all 1999 common test items and sample student work

- *Sample Student Responses, MCAS Tests of May 1998.* Sample student responses illustrate MCAS performance levels for each subject area and grade tested.

- *MCAS Participation Guidelines for Students with Disabilities* and other materials on Alternate Assessment

These publications along with other MCAS materials are available on the Department's Internet site at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas, or by phone at (781) 338-3625.

Appendix A:
Commonly Asked Questions about MCAS and Students with Disabilities

"Why does the state test students with disabilities?"

Both the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – Amendments of 1997* (IDEA-97) and the *Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993* mandate that students with disabilities participate in statewide testing. In addition, the state is responsible for assessing programs that educate Massachusetts students, and for holding schools and districts accountable for the quality of instruction. This is not possible if a significant portion of students in the system is excused from the test. When results for all students with disabilities are counted in school and district scores, it is anticipated that those students will be provided equal access to the resources and learning opportunities of a school.

"My child experiences anxiety and frustration in taking MCAS tests. Isn't the state doing more harm than good by testing these students?"

The MCAS tests are challenging. While many students perform well, others may be disappointed in their results. Once students have learned and studied curriculum that is based on the state's learning standards and become familiar with the testing format, we anticipate that student performance will improve. Self-esteem is important, but it is equally important for students to receive good instruction and to leave school having achieved at their highest possible levels. Students' self-esteem, moreover, will be bolstered by the progress they demonstrate on their MCAS results and on other locally based assessments. Parents should address this issue at IEP Team meetings to determine whether the use of test accommodations might reduce or overcome the level of anxiety on the part of the student.

"My child failed MCAS the last time he took it. Can he take an alternate assessment next time?"

Poor performance on MCAS alone does not make a child eligible for an alternate assessment. Alternate assessments are intended for an extremely small number of students with intensive disabilities. One example of a student requiring an alternate assessment would be a student receiving individualized and intensive instruction in a subject area who is performing at a level of achievement many years below grade level, and who is unable to demonstrate achievement through a paper-and-pencil test. For more information, see "Determining How Students with Disabilities Will Participate in MCAS" in this document.

"Are there other circumstances that would make a child eligible for an alternate assessment?"

A student may be considered for an alternate assessment if his or her disability presents an insurmountable challenge to taking standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations. A student with *severe* autism, cerebral palsy, or multiple physical disabilities may be someone who requires an alternate assessment. In other instances an alternate assessment may be considered where a student with a severe or complex disability requires accommodations that are not allowed on the MCAS test in a particular subject area. These decisions, however, must be determined by a student's IEP or 504 Team on an individual basis and in each subject area, rather than based on specific categories or kinds of disabilities.

"What will happen if my child doesn't pass the grade 10 MCAS tests?"

Beginning with the graduating class of 2003, if a student is unable to pass grade 10 MCAS tests in *English Language Arts* and *Mathematics*, the student will have multiple opportunities to retake those tests before the end of his or her senior year. If the student has been unable to pass those tests by the end of his or her senior year, it is anticipated that the state Board of Education will approve the awarding of a local certificate of completion by the district to the student if he or she has fulfilled all local requirements for graduation.

Appendix B: Guidelines for IEP Teams: Determining How Students with Disabilities Should Participate in the MCAS

These guidelines should be used by Teams to inform their decisions based on the needs of each student resulting from his or her disability. A separate decision must be made for the student in each subject area. IEP and 504 Teams have final authority to determine the manner in which a student with a disability will participate in MCAS; to propose which accommodations, if any, are needed by the student; and to determine whether or not a student requires an alternate assessment.

If IEP or 504 Teams have questions about whether any proposed accommodation is appropriate, they must contact the Department of Education at (781) 338-3625.

Characteristics of Student's Instructional Program and Assessment	Recommended Participation in MCAS
OPTION 1 ***Instructional Program:*** The student is engaged in an instructional program guided by the *Curriculum Framework* learning standards in this subject area, and is working on learning standards at or near grade level; and, ***Assessment:*** The student is generally able to take a paper-and-pencil test under routine conditions, or with one or more allowable test accommodations.	The student should take the standard MCAS test in this subject area, either routinely or with necessary accommodation(s) that are modeled on instructional accommodation(s) used in the student's educational program.
OPTION 2 ***Instructional Program:*** The student is engaged in an instructional program guided by the *Curriculum Framework* learning standards in this subject area, but is working on learning standards that have been modified and are below grade level due to the nature of the student's disability(ies); and, ***Assessment:*** The student is generally able to take a paper-and-pencil test under routine conditions, or with one or more allowable test accommodations.	The student should take the standard MCAS test, either routinely or with necessary accommodation(s) that are modeled on instructional accommodation(s) used in the student's educational program.

OPTION 3

Instructional Program: The student is engaged in an instructional program guided by the *Curriculum Framework* learning standards in this subject area, and is working on learning standards either at, near, or below grade level; and, ***Assessment***: The student is generally able to take a paper-and-pencil test under routine conditions, or with one or more allowable test accommodation(s), except when the nature and complexity of the student's disability present him/her with unique and insurmountable challenges in demonstrating his/her knowledge and skills on a test of this duration; or the format of a substantial portion of the test does not allow the student to demonstrate his/her knowledge and skills (See page 19 in this Appendix for specific examples.)	The student should take the standard MCAS test in this subject area, with accommodations if necessary. However, the Team may recommend an alternate assessment for those students with very significant disabilities for whom test accommodations proposed by the IEP or 504 Team are not allowable or available. (See page 19 in this Appendix for specific examples.)

OPTION 4

Instructional Program: The student is engaged in an instructional program, guided by the *Curriculum Framework* in this subject area, requiring substantial modification to the learning standards being addressed due to the severity of the student's disability(ies); and, The student requires very intensive, individualized instruction in order to acquire knowledge, make generalizations, and/or demonstrate skills in this subject area; and, ***Assessment***: The student is generally **unable** to demonstrate knowledge on a paper-and-pencil test, even with accommodations.	• The student should be given an alternate assessment in this content area. *Participation in alternate assessments is intended for a very small number of students with significant disabilities.* • The school principal must complete an *Alternate Assessment Student Report* form for each student who takes an alternate assessment in any subject area. These forms must be returned with the school's MCAS testing materials. • Alternate assessments for the spring 2000 MCAS tests must be developed by the student's IEP or 504 Team. Results from these alternate assessments should be reported to parents, but need not be reported to the Department. • Results from the spring 2001 statewide *MCAS Alternate Assessment* will be included in school and district results.

Guidelines for IEP Teams: Determining How Students with Disabilities Should Participate in the MCAS:

Instructional Program and Assessment, Option 3: EXAMPLES (See previous page)

In circumstances that would present insurmountable obstacles to testing a student, or that would prevent him/her from demonstrating knowledge and skills on the test, or that would require the use of accommodations that are not allowed for MCAS tests in certain subject areas, IEP and 504 Teams may recommend alternate assessment as the most appropriate assessment option for that student. The following examples are not to be considered as definitive criteria, since the educational needs of each student must be determined individually, but are given to expand Teams' understanding of appropriate alternate assessment use:

- a student who, as a consequence of either intensive emotional impairments or pervasive developmental disabilities, is unable to maintain sufficient concentration to participate in standard testing, even with allowable test accommodations

- a student with a specific and intensive learning impairment who would require accommodations that are not allowable in order to demonstrate comprehension of written text on the MCAS *ELA Language and Literature* test and/or to express written skills on the MCAS *ELA Composition* test[3]

- a student who is blind and does not read Braille who would therefore require a reader for the MCAS *ELA Language and Literature* test

- a deaf student who would require American Sign Language (ASL) or other signed interpretation to convey written text on the MCAS *ELA Language and Literature* test, or a scribe to provide evidence of written skills on the MCAS *ELA Composition* test

- a student with multiple physical disabilities or severe cerebral palsy for whom the demands of a prolonged test administration would present an insurmountable physical challenge or undue hardship

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[3] The following accommodations are not allowable for MCAS tests:
- scribing the *ELA Composition* test
- reading or signing any portion of the *ELA Language and Literature* test
- using a calculator during any grade 4 *Mathematics* test session or any non-calculator session of the grade 8 or grade 10 *Mathematics* tests
- administering MCAS tests for a grade level that is unmatched to the student's chronological age (e.g., grade 4 test administered to a grade 8 student)
- paraphrasing, simplifying, or altering test questions and/or multiple-response options

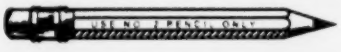
Appendix C:
Sample MCAS *Alternate Assessment Student Report* Form

MCAS ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT STUDENT REPORT, SPRING 2000

Directions: Principals or their designee must complete this report for each student with a disability (with an IEP or Section 504 Plan) who did NOT participate in one or more standard MCAS tests in 2000. Be sure to complete one form per student. If additional forms are needed, please contact MCAS Support Services at 1-800-737-5103. DO NOT DUPLICATE THIS FORM.

Information for this survey will be used to determine important information about students with disabilities who participated in locally-developed alternate assessments in spring 2000, and to guide development of state-approved alternate assessments. Please fill in all circles completely using a No. 2 pencil only.

CORRECT MARK ○●○○ **INCORRECT MARKS** ⊖ ⊘ ⊗ ◉



1. Name of school and district; educational collaborative; 766 private school or institutional setting

2. SCHOOL CODE

3. STUDENT NAME GRID

LAST NAME | FIRST NAME | MI

SAMPLE FORM
DO NOT USE

4. STATE-ASSIGNED STUDENT ID

5. Nature of program in which student is placed (indicate one category only):

- ○ General Education Classroom (502.1)
- ○ Resource Room (502.2 & 502.3)
- ○ Self- contained Classroom in District (502.4)
- ○ Public Day School (502.4i)
- ○ Private Day School (502.5)
- ○ Private Residential Program (502.6)
- ○ Other (please specify)

Place Bar Code Label Here

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

6. Why was this student not included in all or some parts of the 2000 standard MCAS tests? (indicate only one).

- ○ Student received intensive, individualized instruction across all or most settings and subject areas, and, instructional level is modified extensively, and, paper and pencil tests are not used routinely with this student.
- ○ Test accommodations that could be used to assess a student with a documented severe learning disability on standard MCAS tests were not permitted.
- ○ The nature and severity of the student's disability present insurmountable challenges to paper and pencil testing, although student currently receives instruction at or near grade level.

7. Which statement best describes the nature of this student's current educational program?

- ○ Working close to grade level on curricula based on state's academic learning standards.
- ○ Working well below grade level on curricula based on state's academic learning standards.
- ○ Working well below grade level on curricula NOT based on state's academic learning standards.
- ○ Other (Please describe in box at right.)

8. In what ways was evidence of the student's performance collected? (Indicate all that apply).

- ○ Audio or video tape
- ○ Data charts constructed daily, weekly, and/or quarterly
- ○ Narrative reports (or logs, descriptions, annotated notes)
- ○ Portfolio or samples of student work
- ○ Performance tasks
- ○ Other (Describe below)

9. Was the student's alternate assessment based on the Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks* learning standards?

ELA	Mathematics	Science & Technology	History and Social Science
○ Totally	○ Totally	○ Totally	○ Totally
○ Mostly	○ Mostly	○ Mostly	○ Mostly
○ A little	○ A little	○ A little	○ A little
○ Not at all	○ Not at all	○ Not at all	○ Not at all

10. What is the current position of the person(s) who completed this Report?

- ○ Special education teacher
- ○ Classroom teacher
- ○ Educational team liaison
- ○ Special education consultant/related service provider
- ○ Special education administrator
- ○ School administrator
- ○ Other (Specify) _____

Appendix D:
Acknowledgements

Massachusetts Alternate Assessment Advisory Committee

Jeanne Anderson	Massachusetts Hospital School
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Anthony DeMatteo	Saugus Public Schools
Alice Donahue	Methuen Public Schools
Rosemary Driend	Methuen Public Schools
Nancy Dutton	Leicester Public Schools
Elizabeth Fleming	Simmons College
Carrie Ingrassia	Methuen Public Schools
Julia Landau	Massachusetts Advocacy Center
Donna Lehr	Boston University
Kathryn Levine	East Bridgewater Public Schools
Steve McKenna	Abington Public Schools
Tom Miller	Perkins School for the Blind
Suzanne Recane	Learning Center for Deaf Children
Richard Robison	Federation for Children with Special Needs
Jeff Rubin	Waltham Public Schools
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